CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies News

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From the Dean's Desk

Community Links Through Concordia's Art Therapy Graduates:
Yvon Lamy
Donna Jacobs
David Bedford: From Political Science to Philosophy

From the Dean's Desk

Educating Genius

How can Concordia University recognize, promote and meet the needs of students of exceptional talent and ability?

This fall, Ruth Lawrence, a brilliant seventeen-year-old mathematician from Oxford will begin a year as visiting professor at Harvard to carry out research and teach graduate students. Ruth was admitted to Oxford at the age of 10, received her bachelor's degree with first class honours in mathematics at 13 and has been doing fundamental research ever since. Similar success stories are occasionally reported elsewhere. How could Concordia, or any other university for that matter, have "educated Ruth"?

At Concordia, we have an elaborate support structure for typical students and for students in difficulty with the system. But we are amazingly bureaucratic when it comes to dealing with exceptions at the other end of the scale. What we should be doing is finding ways and means to help bright students enter the university and, once here, to foster their talents and genius. Recently, I received an appeal from a brilliant student to be allowed to graduate more quickly than permitted by the program. Surely we should encourage such brilliant students to move on to greater heights when their motivation and ability warrant it. The counter-argument is that a university degree testifies to the fact that a student has reached the appropriate level of maturity and that such maturity is the result of spending an allocated amount of time in the system. On the other hand, there is nothing absolute about this allocated time and certainly nothing absolute about the rate at which students of different levels of talent reach maturity in their fields of study.

At the undergraduate level, Concordia University has created units that both attract and superbly educate gifted students. The Liberal Arts College, the Science College, Lonergan College, and the Simone de Beauvoir Institute fulfil this function. Their styles are different, their motives are different, and their rates of success are different. Nevertheless, they share a passion for academic excellence and scholarship that attracts some of the best students in the country. Their success is our success and we have the graduates to prove that the values driving the system are sound.

Can we be equally creative at the graduate level? For exceptional students we have the Special Individual Programs that allow students a considerable amount of freedom in the design and implementation of their degree programs. Very few students are admitted into such programs since one of the caveats is that special individual graduate students are not supposed to require any resources. For the first time in the twenty-five year history of graduate studies at Concordia, we are "appraising" the special individual graduate programs in the same way in which all other graduate programs are appraised routinely. Perhaps we will receive a recommendation that we should establish an appropriate funded graduate college for exceptional students. Perhaps we will also receive a recommendation that the university's undergraduate colleges should widen their horizons and admit brilliant graduate students into their ranks. Whatever the recommendation, we must recognize that one of the measures of a university's strength and maturity is its ability to offer academic excellence at all levels of learning and for all ages. This type of thinking is obviously applicable to a great range of programs, even in traditional disciplines. We, the academic community, have an obligation and an opportunity to promote our best.

M. E. Szabo
Dean

Yvon Lamy – Art Therapy Graduate and Founding Member of Centre d'Apprentissage Parallèle de Montréal.

The people who come to Centre d'Apprentissage Parallèle de Montréal want a chance to manage their problems and overcome the stigma of being labelled incapable. They have been diagnosed as schizophrenic, manic depressive and psychotic. And they share their love of art as their chosen route to recovery.

The bilingual art therapy community resource centre for ex-psychiatric patients, is currently in its fourth year of operation. It is a non-profit organization funded by Montreal's Health and Social Services Council, acting as a buffer for people who otherwise have nowhere to turn. Concordia is the predominant training centre for art therapists who deal with the Centre.

Yvon Lamy, a graduate of Concordia's master's program in art therapy, is largely responsible for the Centre's success. "The fieldwork I did during the program, in geriatric social services and in hospital psychiatric departments, directly prepared me for what I'm doing now," says Lamy.

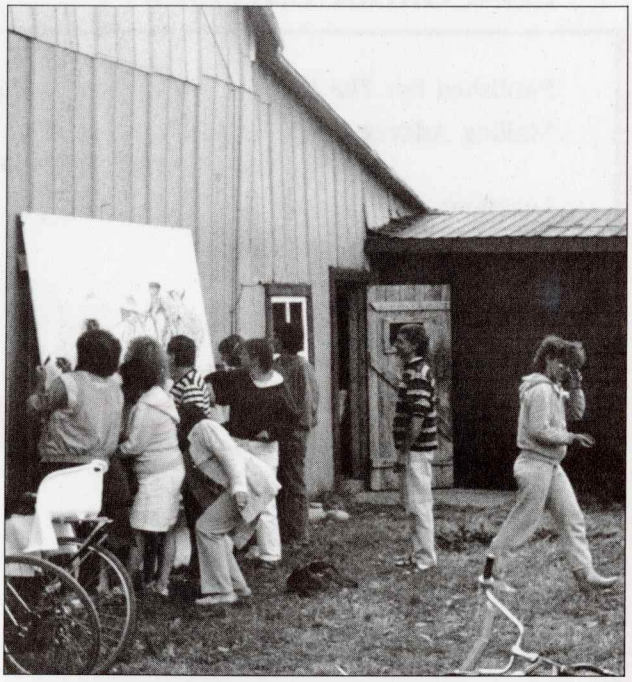
After obtaining a B.A. in philosophy in 1960, Lamy returned to school in 1980, beginning a second bachelor's degree in psychology at Concordia. Deciding to focus on art, he transferred to the Faculty of Fine Arts where he obtained his degree with a major in art education. There he discovered the career opportunity he was seeking — one which combined fine arts and psychology — art therapy.

Lamy went on to complete both the diploma and master's in art therapy, and became one of the Centre's founding members. Today he is one of the three full-time animators. In addition to being one of the Centre's administrators, Lamy practices both private and group art therapy. He is President of the Quebec Association of Art Therapists and is active on the National Council. He is also writing a biography of Marie Revai, now 76, one of the original pioneers in the field of art therapy.

The basic concept of art therapy, according to Lamy, is "to help people express their feelings through images, first at a very distanced, somewhat imaginary level, and then pulling insights on their here and now situation from that process."

Concordia plays a vital role in the Centre's activities. The program draws public attention to the Centre in the community and the Centre in turn serves as an important working tool for Concordia's Art Education students when they do their internships.

"Because we're a young profession, it's important to stay in contact with other art therapists, as well as with Concordia, so that we don't dilute what the program taught us," says Lamy. "This allows for a solid and well-rooted foundation for our profession."



Yvon Lamy (in striped sweater), supervises Art Therapy sessions at centre

"In addition to being the only Canadian master's program in art therapy," says Lamy, "Concordia's other advantage is that it's a small, closely-knit program, which is a great source of strength to the profession."

As Centre d'Apprentissage Parallèle de Montréal continues to expand (it doubled in size last year to about 150 patients), Lamy wants to bring in art therapy students as well. The Centre, which currently utilizes painting and drawing, weaving on full-size looms, painting on silk and batik, yoga and massage, may expand into music therapy as well.

People come to the Centre as they emerge from isolation, to be active in a place that is conducive to social integration. Also, being active within a community resource centre lessens the stigma of institutionalization because it's one step closer to the outside world.

"The goal is to prepare them to work their way back into mainstream society. For those whom this is less likely to happen, at least they will learn to interact with people at the centre," states Lamy.

There are two types of activities at the Centre: creative and commercial. The culminative result is training that will hopefully generate jobs for students. Some go on to work as assistants here, others have found outside jobs, and others have gone back to school. Although this is not job training, the term "work" is an important one at the Centre. The goal is for people to upgrade their social skills through communication and training to instill motivation.

At the end of each session the Centre holds an exhibition to display and sell students' pieces. In addition to the slight, yet welcome, income generated, a public showing also produces less tangible but extremely important benefits.

"The showings re-motivate our people," says Lamy. "Their enthusiasm grows with the appreciation for their art. The most important aspect," he says, "is that it makes them want to get out, to work, to better their own lives."

The artwork includes simple sketches and complex drawings, paintings, collages, colorful silk scarves, intricate cloth weaveworks, and packages of greeting cards, all carefully done by hand. "Our ultimate goal," says Lamy, "is to de-mystify mental illness. Not to deny it, but to learn to live with it. We want to sensitize the public to these people by showing the quality of their work and especially the value of this program. We don't just keep people busy in order to fill up their days," says Lamy. "We try to upgrade their level of functioning, help them accomplish things, get recognition for what they do, and become aware of their potential."

The Centre's most recent exhibition was appropriately entitled "Artimon", the French word for a small but sturdy mast and sail used by ships when they face storms and troubled waters.

For further information on the Centre d'Apprentissage Parallèle de Montréal contact: Yvon Lamy at 843-5658.

Donna Jacobs, Art Therapy's "pure psychologist"

Donna Jacobs – A Psychologist's View of Art Therapy

If you want to talk to Donna Jacobs, make sure it's on a Friday, because that's her only free day. Jacobs leads an interesting and diversified life as a psychologist, teacher, wife, mother, and rock and roll singer, and manages to juggle her family life and three careers: teaching psychology in Concordia's Art Education and Art Therapy diploma programs, operating a private practice and singing in a band.

Jacobs began her university education at Teacher's College, and went on to complete a diploma program at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. She then taught art classes at a mental heath centre where she realized that there was a lot more than meets the eye in the artwork produced by the psychiatric patients.

Urged by the centre's director, Jacobs decided to resume her studies full-time and obtained her undergraduate degree in psychology at Concordia in just two years. It was here that she found her niche. "Doing my undergraduate work was one of the most wonderful times for me," she says. "Once I started to study psychology, I knew this was the place I was meant to be."

After graduation, Jacobs went on to complete her master's degree and begin her doctorate at the University of Ottawa. One year into the doctorate, however, her lifelong passion for music beckoned and she returned to Montreal to join a friend's band as lead singer, balancing that with the day-time activities of teaching at Vanier College and her own private practice.

After teaching at a summer program for learning-disabled children at McGill University, she went on to teach at College Marie-Victorin, and in 1979 began teaching psychology to art education students at Concordia, adding a class for art therapy students with the program's inception a year later.

Jacobs' course for art therapy students is offered under the auspices of the Department of Psychology, but is available exclusively to diploma students in art therapy.

Jacobs values her role as the one "pure" psychologist among a group of art therapists. "I see my role as one end of the continuum within the department. The other faculty members are more art-oriented, with some background in psychology, and I'm the clinical pychologist, with a background in fine arts."

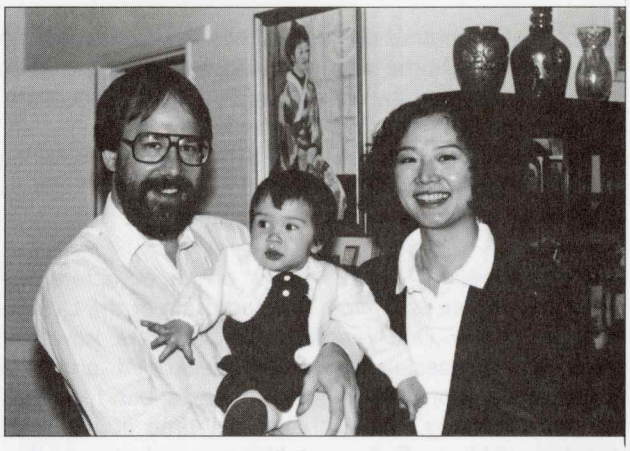
"Teaching art education students is vastly different from teaching art therapy students," says Jacobs. "When you're training therapists, the emphasis is on the psychological, because they will be dealing with some very troubled people. But when you're teaching educators, the focus must be directed more to behaviourial problems. However, there is some overlap because both involve training in therapeutic skills and learning to deal with people."

In addition to being a very involved parent of two young daughters, Jacobs works at her private therapy practice three days a week, teaches at Concordia, sings on Saturday and Sunday evenings, paints, draws, plays guitar and goes to exercise classes. "I find teaching far more time-consuming than my practice," she says.

Much of her time at home is spent preparing courses and exams and correcting papers.

"In terms of careers, it's quite a mix, but it really is much more orderly than it seems."

David Bedford – M.A. in Philosophy



David Bedford at home

Unconventional Philosopher in Modern World

David Bedford is able to discuss his interest in the philosophy of science while he watches over his eleven-month-old daughter, Riiko, who sits in her highchair holding her own rather raucous discussion.

"I'm interested in the logic of scientific investigation," he says. "I think it's important politically for people to have concepts which will allow them to make sense of their everyday experiences." Bedford, who graduated from Concordia in 1976 with a B.A. in history, went on to York University, where he earned a master's degree in history and a doctorate in political science in 1986. He has now returned to Concordia to work part-time on a master's degree in philosophy.

In many ways the 34-year-old Bedford goes against the conception—or the misconception— of the materialistic university student of the '80s.

"David is someone who breaks out of the regular mold of most graduate students," says Vladimir Zeman, director of the master's program in philosophy. "Here we have someone with a doctorate in political science who has come to Concordia to complete a master's degree in philosophy."

Before making the decision to once again pursue graduate studies, Bedford worked as a political researcher for the Ontario government's Select Committee on Constitutional Reform, the body responsible for formulating that province's policy on Meech Lake. "Political scientists are sometimes hired by governments to find ideologically acceptable justifications of decisions they want to make," he states. "It took me a while to find that out, and when I did, I left."

Bedford says he finds a natural intellectual bridge between the study of political science and philosophy. "The highest levels of ideology in society are to be found in logic and religion, and that's where the basis is for politics," he says.

Bedford refers to philosophy as the theology of the modern world, and compares the various disciplines of human knowledge to the construction of an arch. "In the Middle Ages, theology was seen as the keystone of science. Now it has been replaced by philosophy."

Returning to school gives him a chance to pursue a career he feels good about, and at the same time, helps him meet family commitments. Riiko's mother, Sue Tatemichi, is a doctor whose schedule requires constant juggling between work and study commitments.

Family is what he cherishes most in life. Bedford states that the birth of his daughter has not caused big changes in his life but it has changed his way of thinking in at least one area: "I've become much more aware of the importance of the feminist movement. What was once a theoretical question is now an immediate one."

Upcoming Doctoral Examinations

Candidate:	T. Srinivasan Narayan, Computer Science
Date:	Wednesday, Aug. 16, 1989 at 10:00 a.m. in Room H-769
Thesis Title:	Concurrency Control Scheme for Design Object Bases
Candidate:	Carol Moralejo, Chemistry & Biochemistry
Examination Date:	Thursday, Aug. 17, 1989 at 2:00 p.m. in Room H-769
Thesis Title:	Wavelength Dependent, Solvent Dependent and Transient Absorption Behavior in Photchemical Substitution Reactions of $W(CO)_5L$ (L=pyridine, piperidine, CO)

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